

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9082

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

S E C R E T KUWAIT 1077

ATHENS FOR ATO; BEIRUT FOR RCO

1. A SURVEY TEAM VISITED DOHA ON MARCH 14-16 AND HAS COMPILED A REPORT WHICH IS BEING SUBMITTED IN AIRGRAM FORM. INCLUDED WILL BE BLUEPRINTS FOR THREE SITES, THE NATIONAL & GRINDLAY BANK, LTD. BUILDING; THE YOUSEF UBAYDAN HOUSE AND THE ALI AL-SHAAR HOUSE. ALL COULD SERVE AS A CHANCERY BUT IN THE OPINION OF THE TEAM TWO OFFER BETTER POTENTIAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EMBASSY. ALL THREE LOCATIONS ARE STILL UNDER PREPARATION FOR OCCUPANCE.

2 GENERAL COMMENTS RELATED TO EACH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. NATIONAL & GRINDLAY BANK: RENTAL SPACE IN BEING READIED WITH A PROJECTION FOR AVAILABILITY OF JULY, 1974 WITH SOME LAG POSSIBLE THROUH OCTOBER. ORIGINAL RENTAL QUOTE OF \$27,000 PER ANNUM IS ANTICIPATED BE INCREASED BECAUSE OF RISING COSTS PARTICULARLY FOR FINISHING WORK. A COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY WOULD REQUIRE A SHIELDED ENCLOSURE, AND THAT WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE IN PLACE TO PERMIT MACHINE OPERATION FOR UP TO 10 MONTHS TO A YEAR FROM DATE A CONTRACT WOULD BE LET. THEREFORE, IF BANK BUILDING WERE TO BE EMBASSY LOCATION, OTP COMMUNICATIONS WOULD BE ONLY SYSTEM POSSIBLE UNTIL ENCLOSURE WAS INSTALLED. THERE ARE MORE SECURITY AND SAFETY PROBLEMS WITH THIS SITE THAN WITH THE OTHERS. TEAM, IN AIRGRAM REPORT, RECOMMENDS AGAINST LEASING OF BANK BUILDING. CHARGE AND RAO DO NOT CONCUR IN THIS

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RECOMMENDATION AS THEY BELIEVE BANK BUILDING OFFERS REPRESENT-

ATIONAL ADVANTAGES NOT FOUND IN OTHER SITES.

B. YOUSEF UBAYDAN HOUSE: HOUSE IS ALMOST READY FOR OCCUPANCY AND AWAITS INSTALLATION OF ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONE LINES. THIS IS LOCALLY PREDICTED FOR READINESS WITHIN TWO MONTHS. TEAM WAS TOLD RENTAL ABOUT \$9,000 PER ANNUM AS IS. A COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY COULD BECOME OPERATIONAL UPON OCCUPANCY. A SHIELDED ENCLOSURE COULD BE PROGRAMMED TO FOLLOW AT A LATER DATE. TEAM RECOMMENDS ENCLOSING TWO OPEN PORCHES AND OTHER MINOR RENOVATIONS TO PROVIDE SPACE FOR A SHIELDED ENCLOSURE AND MORE OPERATING FOOTAGE FOR REST OF EMBASSY ACTIVITIES. TEAM ESTIMATES THIS WOULD REQUIRE AN OFFER OF INCREASED RENTAL TO APPROXIMATELY \$12,000 PER ANNUM. (RAO'S ESTIMATE FOR NECESSARY EXPANSION AND AIR-CONDITIONING WOULD MAKE THIS FIGURE MORE NEAR \$18-20,000). IT COULD ALSO DELAY READINESS DATE SOMEWHAT. THIS IS ALTERNATE CHOICE OF TEAM.

C. ALI AL-SHAAR HOUSE: THE HOUSE, COMPRISING TWO ONE-STORY BUILDINGS, IS PROJECTED BY OWNER FOR COMPLETION IN FOUR MONTHS. BUILDER WILL AMEND BUILDING PLANS TO MEET NEEDS OF EMBASSY. A COMMITMENT FOR INTENTION TO LEASE WOULD PROVIDE FOR REQUESTING A PARTIAL FIRST (SECOND US) FLOOR ON ROOF OF MAIN BUILDING. THIS WOULD HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY, AND INSTALLATION OF AN ENCLOSURE AT A LATER DATE. BY THIS RENOVATION, LATER AND MORE COSTLY RENOVATIONS WOULD BE PRECLUDED. TEAM WAS TOLD RENTAL IS APPROXIMATELY \$19,000 PER ANNUM PLUS COST OF A PARTIAL OR FULL SECOND STORY AND AIR-CONDITIONING. TEAM STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THIS SITE. FOR REASONS STATED IN PARA 2, SUBPARA A, CHARGE AND RAO DO NOT AGREE THAT THIS SITE SHOULD RECEIVE A RECOMMENDATION OVER BANK BUILDING.

3. RENTAL FIGURES SUBJECT TO FURTHER VERIFICATION.

4. IT REQUESTED THAT DEPARTMENT ADVISE WHAT ANNUAL RENTAL BUDGET HAS BEEN DECIDED FOR DOHA, QATAR AND WHETHER A COMMITMENT OF INTENTION CAN BE MADE TO ALLOW NEGOTIATION FOR LEASING. RENOVATION AND A DATE FOR OCCUPANCY. FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IF DEPT COULD PROVIDE EVEN ROUGH DATES FOR AMBASSADOR AND OTHER STAFF ARRIVAL AND/OR DATE FOR OCCUPANCY.

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5. AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS: TEAM HAS DONE EXCELLENT JOB OF IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE CHANCERIES IN A CITY OF VERY LIMITED CHOICE. THERE ARE PROS AND CONS TO ALL THREE ALTERNATIVES CITED IN TEAM'S REPORT. I PLAN VISIT DOHA SHORTLY TO VIEW PREMISES UNDER CONSIDERATION AND MAKE MY RECOMMENDATION, AND WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING DEPARTMENT'S REPORT IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS IN PARA 4 BEFORE PROCEEDING. IN GENERAL, REPORT SEEMS ENCOURAGING, ALTHOUGH IF NEGOTIATIONS WITH LANDLORDS REQUIRED AND FURTHER

CONSTRUCTION NECESSARY, WE SHOULD NOT COUNT ON MODERATE RENTALS
OR SPEEDY CONSTRUCTION. AS DEPT AWARE FROM OUR EFFORTS OPEN DOHA
IN FIRST PLACE, CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY OVER SUMMER ESPECIALLY
SLOW. WE MUST THEREFORE ACT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO MAKE FINAL
DECISION AND NEGOTIATE DETAILS, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION
URGENCY OF HAVING EXPANDED EMBASSY IN OPERATION.
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